DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 063 753 EM 009 918

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TITLE	Part of the Whole.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	26 Mar 72
NOTE	14p.; Paper presented at the Tuskegee Institute Founder's Day Convocation (Tuskegee, Alabama, March 26, 1972)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Educational History; *Educational Improvement; *Federal Aid; *Higher Education; *Negro Colleges; Negro Education; *Negro Institutions; Negro Leadership
IDENTIFIERS	*Tuskegee Institute

ABSTRACT

All Americans are in debt to the predominantly black institutions, for in redeeming their own people, they are helping in the redemption of our entire society. The present administration in Washington is determined to help black colleges build on their records of accomplishments, and to learn from them. Links between black institutions, which have had experience training and helping all minority groups, and predominantly white institutions must be made so that cooperative programs can be developed to strengthen all American higher education. Along these lines, the United States Office of Education will direct $100 million in fiscal year 1973 toward black colleges and other institutions enrolling a large number of minority students to support new efforts at building undergraduate programs leading to professions, and to support continued efforts in training leaders for the black community. With increased Federal support, black institutions will be able to increase their usefulness and educational relevance by improving current programs, investigating areas of special concern and importance to blacks and other minorities, and providing greater service to the community. (SH)

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PART OF THE WHOLE*

By S. P. Marland, Jr.
U.S. Commissioner of Education
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

Walking the gracious, winding paths of this huge campus, viewing many of the noble buildings constructed by the students, seeing the animation of the young men and women, and sensing the institutional vitality of Tuskegee, it is rather difficult for me to imagine all of this was launched by one man--one man who as a nine year old lad was listed among the chattel assets of his master as worth $400.

This living monument to his efforts, of course, makes the lot of a Founder's Day speaker anything but enviable. For the richest oratory, the most fulsome words of praise must seem inadequate as we look back 91 years to when Booker T. Washington first trudged the soil of Alabama and began to construct what surely is one of the most profound and deeply inspiring episodes in the history of American education.

One wonders what wellspring of courage he was able to tap in those uncertain times --- in the closing days of the Reconstruction, in the dawn of the Restoration when the hooded nightriders cast their ugly shadow across a tense landscape. Fear stalked the land, but Booker T. Washington, steadfast to a dream said, "I will allow no man to drag me down so low as to make me hate him."

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*Before Tuskegee Institute Founder's Day Convocation, Tuskegee, Alabama, Sunday, March 26, 1972, 10:00 a.m.

In his biography of Tuskegee's founder, Basil Matthews notes: "The moving and truly astonishing drama of Booker T. Washington's life exercises its spell upon our imagination as we see him moving with his strange blend of wary shrewdness, unswerving courage, 'pawky' humor, and cool fortitude across a perilous terrain toward a clearly envisaged although distant goal."

A distant goal indeed. For Tuskegee, as well you know, was to join with a small, courageous band of other black institutions that with scant resources faced the arduous task of not only building up a collegiate program but also of maintaining secondary and even elementary programs to overcome the long night of what slavery and discrimination had wrought for an entire people. In viewing the achievements of this remarkable group of institutions I think it only appropriate to paraphrase Churchill's words in praise of the Royal Air Force in 1940 when the scourge of Hitlerism threatened his people and civilization itself--never did so many owe so much to so few.

All Americans are in debt to the predominantly black institutions, for in redeeming their own people, they are helping in the redemption of our entire society. They are making possible a coming together of the races--if not yet on the basis of love, then on the foundation of respect and understanding, which condition, I suspect, is antecedent to the former.

So let it be said here and now that however important Tuskegee and its sister institutions are to black people, they are unalterably a vital national resource, upon which we all look with an abiding sense of pride and respect.

In a society that is still marred by racism, an often unintentioned belittling of the black schools does occur. Recently, an article in a prominent establishment magazine was called to my attention. The title said: "Black Colleges Are Worth Saving." And it turned out the article was indeed sympathetic to the financial plight of black colleges. But the title, I submit, is patronizing and demeaning. Could you imagine, for instance, an article in the same magazine on the financial problems of Ivy League schools--and they have them, believe me--titled: "Ivy League Schools Are Worth Saving." No, that could not happen. Maybe, "Ivy League Schools in Financial Crises," but not a gratuitous value judgment about whether the schools deserve to live or die.

This Administration in which I serve in Washington, you may be assured, does not for one moment reflect on whether predominantly black institutions are worth saving. This is simply not an issue. What we are determined to do is to help them flourish--to build on their outstanding record of accomplishments, and equally if not more important, to learn from them. And no one showed doubt that all of our colleges and universities have much to learn from your experiences.

For almost a century you have been engaged in an activity that only within the last decade has been a major preoccupation of all of education --- the mission of rescuing disadvantaged young people. Some of us are johnny-come-latelies to this task. You have provided remedial programs, practiced open admissions, initiated the cycle of going to college in families in which no one had ever attended college, and developed solid career-oriented programs. Indeed you championed racial integration before it was fashionable. So there exists here at Tuskegee and at other traditionally black colleges a rich reservoir of knowledge concerning some of the most vital problems confronting American higher education, problems that must be solved now. We can delay no longer in removing the last vestiges of discrimination not only against blacks, but against poor white Americans, Spanish-speaking Americans, Indians, and other minorities. Fortunately, the links between black colleges and predominantly white institutions are being forged. These connections are being developed on the basis of mutual respect for each other's competencies. Tuskegee, I know, has pioneered in establishing mutually beneficial relationships with predominantly white institutions in the creation of its cooperative programs with the University of Michigan dating back to 1963, before Federal support was available for such enterprises. We in the Office of Education have and will continue to provide financial support for such activities, not simply to help black institutions but to strengthen all of

American higher education.

It is in this same spirit that OE's fiscal 1973 budget will direct $100 million, nearly double the 1972 figure, toward black colleges and other institutions enrolling a large number of minority students such as Mexican-Americans and American Indians. The new money is not intended simply to expand existing programs, but to support a new, focused effort at building undergraduate programs leading to the professions. These funds represent $48 million over this year's level. This is in keeping with a steadily rising level of support for predominantly black colleges under the Nixon Administration. During the 1970-71 academic year the Nation's black institutions enrolled slightly over 2 percent of all college students and received 3.4 percent of all Federal aid to higher education--a total of $125 million, or 16 percent over the previous year. Next year the figure will reach four percent Federal aid to black colleges, while enrollment probably will sustain at about two percent.

I am happy to report to you that Tuskegee in particular has benefited from Federal assistance efforts, ranking third among traditionally black colleges in overall governmental support. Under our Title III Developing Institutions program alone, Tuskegee will receive this fiscal year some $750,000, or a quarter-of-a-million more than last year. Tuskegee's overall support from OE now tops $2.5 million, with the great majority

of your students receiving assistance under such programs as Work-Study, Educational Opportunity Grants, and National Defense Student loans. I cite these figures to point out that we are not simply engaging in rhetorical exercises. This generation of black people has had more than its share of rhetoric we say that black schools must be helped as integral and important segments of the American higher education structure, and we are doing something about it.

If I seem to be stressing the significance of black institutions as part and parcel of our national higher education resource, please do not be misled into thinking that I am attempting to deny them their "blackness"--their special role in meeting the needs and aspirations of black people. Obviously, that is their mission, one that Tuskegee has been remarkably successful at for almost a century. Most recently, in the decade of the 1960's, we have seen black students from campuses such as yours play a leadership role in demanding that equality of opportunity and justice become a reality, and that the individuality and cultural identity of the black man and woman in America be recognized. History may well record that the redefinition of the role of the college as an active rather than passive academic participant in social reform found its headwaters on black college campuses. And in helping to place in perspective this new aspect of college and university involvement, the traditionally black colleges not only served

black people but also the predominantly white institutions. I think it equally evident that in developing leadership and know-how in the black community you are contributing enormously to the sum total of our intellectual and creative resources which America so desperately needs as we move toward the last quarter of this troubled century.

Of course, I am certainly aware of the remarkable record you and the other black colleges have attained in developing leadership for the black community, in the teaching profession, in the health and social welfare fields, in modern agriculture, in government, and in law. But surely there is room for even greater continuity between academic training and the provision of services to people so that a student--as part of his or her formal training--is actually on the firing line in delivering these services. Successful programs of this nature abound.

Howard and Meharry medical and dental students are providing health services to poor black and white people in rural and urban areas; Xavier University students work in the New Orleans Model Cities program; Fisk students provide counseling services in the surrounding communities, and, of course, there are your own students and faculty working for community economic and social betterment through Tuskegee's Human Resources Development Center.

These initiatives are important for several reasons. First, the consumers of your services, poor blacks and whites, want

this kind of involvement. Second, the black communities in particular are in need of such programs. Third, the student involvement provides hands on training, so essential to effective career development. Fourth, we in government need responsible, imaginative, and creative mechanisms to deliver services. Finally, the predominantly black colleges need the resources and recognition in terms of grants and contracts these kinds of programs can receive from the various Federal government agencies.

There are other roads, too, worthy of being traversed by black institutions--roads that lead to enhancing the lives of black people as well as whites. Clearly, Afro-American studies are becoming a key program area for many of the major predominantly white institutions at secondary level as well as post-secondary. Much of the knowledge base for such studies already exists on black campuses; additional research is needed in some aspects of this important work. Who but the black institutions should be playing a leadership role in this endeavor? They have the knowledge that needs to be transmitted to white institutions. They have the wisdoms of expertise needed for setting up black studies programs. Certainly, the black colleges and universities, as a consequence of their mission and history, should become the focal points for scholarly studies concerning Afro-Americans and become the key institutions in this new, complex, and desirable discipline.

Then, too, I think it vitally important that our Negro institutions continue in the development of truly exemplary undergraduate programs, the type of programs that will enable their graduates successfully to compete in graduate schools for the highest level of professional training in all fields. Clearly, in the foreseeable future, black schools will simply not have the enormous resources needed to develop top-flight programs covering the entire spectrum of science and technology. The critical importance of black professionals has been effectively argued in the recent Carnegie Commission study of black higher education, "Between Two Worlds," by Bowles and Decosta, who point out that at the very heart of solving the racial problem stands, or rather should stand, the black professional. They note:

> "Clergymen, teachers, and lawyers have taken the place of civil servants and elected officials in speaking for Negroes. For this double burden--both professional and political--the small size of the Negro professional group has been a handicap beyond all measurement. It is this small size which necessarily attenuates the communications betwen Negroes and white society, deprives Negroes of the services of professionals (for a white professional does not always replace a nonexistent Negro professional), and, perhaps most important of all, deprives young Negroes of models to follow in shaping their lives.

According to the best available figures, Bureau of Labor statistics for 1970, there are some 766,000 black professionals, or 6.9 percent of the total 11 million-plus total professional force. This represents only slightly more than half of what

it would be if blacks were represented in the professions on the basis of the total percentage of the population they comprise. This professional gap must be closed. It makes no sense at a time when the campus and corporate gates are open wide, after decades of the most shameful discrimination, not to be developing a much larger high-level black talent pool that is ready and able to assert its presence in all areas of our national life. We in the Office of Education, incidentally, are well aware of the talents of black professonals; many are running our biggest and most significant programs. Dr. Preston Valien heads the Bureau of Higher Education, responsible for a multi-billion-dollar assistance program to colleges and universities; Dr. William Smith directs our National Center for Improvement of Educational Systems; Dr. Willa Player is in charge of our support programs for strengthening small developing colleges and universities; Burton Lamkin is Associate Commissioner of the Bureau of Libraries and Learning Resources; Robert Wheeler serves as top man for the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, another billion-plus program which assists elementary and secondary schools; Richard Fairley runs the major Title I compensatory education program, and Dr. Ruth Holloway is responsible for OE's high-priority Right-to-Read program. We also have established within the Office of Eduation an Office of African-American Affairs under the direction of a young black man, Charles Jenkins, who, incidentally, picked up two gold medals

in track for the United States in the 1956 Olympics (let me hasten to say not as a professional). His office has wide-ranging responsibilities for liaison with black constituencies. Thus, the Office of Education is one place that need not be educated about the capabilities of the well-trained black professional.

In addition the challenge to develop exemplary undergraduate programs that lay a firm, substantial base for advanced graduate work in the professions. I think there is yet another area where black schools should stak out a special claim. As black Americans continue to become a more urban people, as the problems of our cities seem to increase exponentially, would it not be feasible for the traditionally black schools to give careful consideration to the creation and strengthening of urban studies programs? This would involve them in the whole gamut of troubling societal problems --- transportation, race relations, schools, ecology and environment, law enforcement, and all the other conditions of our urban life that cry out for help and yet seem so intractable. In developing greater expertise in urban studies, the black schools would be positioning themselves at the center of the new and felicitous activist institutional role, enabling them to become an even more integral part of the whole fabric of American higher education.

One of the most important tasks to which you might address yourselves, given the resources, is the desperately elusive

goal of teaching effectively the poor child, often a minority child, who simply is not learning well. Our work on the disadvantaged for the past six years, despite intensive research and investment, has not produced significant results. I should like to see a few select black colleges, funded adequately from the Office of Education or from other sources, take on the tremendously important research task of addresssing this issue. Who better than you to understand the problem? Who better than your students, many of whom have broken through the constraints of educational isolation? Who better than black colleges to possess the financial resources to attract the ablest social scientists, anthropologists, psychologists, and others, to construct a critical mass of research and development power to achieve at long last the breakthrough on this elusive target?

You might challenge me, however, as I challenge you: improved programs, new areas of responsibility, greater service to the community...fine, but how do you gear up for such activities while wrestling with year-in, year-out problems of fiscal survival? Fortunately, we seem to be on the edge of one of the great breakthroughs in American higher education. The higher education legislation which has cleared <u>both</u> Senate and House and is now under consideration by Senate-House conferees will be, when enacted probably the most significant body of laws relating to colleges and universties since passage

of the Morrill Act more than 100 years ago. Under both Senate and House versions formulas have been devised to provide general operating funds for institutional assistance--an historic first in higher education support programs, and in both Senate and House versions greatly expanded student assistance is provided.

Additionally, the Senate version of the bill, which we support broadly provides for the establishment of a National Foundation for Higher Education that is cast in the spirit of encouraging innovation, and supporting adventurous institutions in meeting additional costs of exemplary programs. As such, it is tailor-made to respond to the requirements of black colleges and universities. The Foundation, coupled with institutional operating assistance and increased funding for disadvantaged students, to my mind presents an exceptional declaration of assurance of equality of postsecondary educational opportunity in this country. Ending educational disadvantagement for whatever reason is the over-riding priority of the Office of Education at all levels of instruction. In this effort it has the whole-hearted backing of the President and his Administration.

As a result of the expanding horizons for higher educational opportunity available to black students at predominantly white schools, it has been argued by some that the black college is an anachronism. Not by a long shot, in my opinion. It is not anachronistic to have literally hundreds of sectarian institutions, a Brandeis or a Notre Dame. These schools have their

special function, not simply to impart knowledge but also to transmit certain values, a particular perspective on life. So no defense of black institutions is required as they play their special role in focusing on the needs of their people, thereby expanding and enriching the sum total of the Nation's resources. For almost a hundred years you and other similar predominantly black institutions have quietly and effectively gone about the business of educating your people, as well as thousands of white students. For a job well done, all Americans owe you their gratitude.

When you celebrate your 100th birthday in 1981, hopefully it will be anachronistic to speak in terms of predominantly black or predominantly white schools as we have here today. Not that they will not exist. They probably will. But perhaps we will talk of institutions only in terms of their efficacy in their transmission of knowledge and, just as important, heritage. Yours is an enviable and rich one. In being what you are, you will find the strength and inspiration to reach the heights of what you can become. As Booker T. Washington said, "No one can in any way permanently hold back a race of people who are getting those elements of strength which the world recognizes, which the world has always recognized, as indicating the highest type of manhood and womanhood."

I say, Amen.

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